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WTO Appoints U.S. International Trade Scholar to WTO Appellate Body

WASHINGTON - U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick today welcomed the decision of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Dispute Settlement Body appointing Professor Merit Janow of Columbia University to the WTO's Appellate Body.

"I am very pleased with today's decision to appoint Merit Janow. Professor Janow embodies the qualities we seek in the Appellate Body itself: integrity, public and professional experience on a broad spectrum of issues and judicial temperament to ensure the highest level of objectivity. I know she will make a significant and positive contribution to the work of the Appellate Body," Zoellick said.

Under the WTO Dispute Settlement Understanding, the Appellate Body is responsible for hearing appeals relating to issues of law and legal interpretations developed by dispute settlement panels. The WTO dispute settlement system was one of the most significant changes from the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, a change sought by the Congress. The system has worked to the benefit of the United States, providing a means to enforce U.S. rights and contributing to greater compliance by WTO Members. The seven members of the Appellate Body serve for four-year terms, with a possibility of a single reappointment. Members are paid on a part-time basis, although their workload is often at or above full-time levels.

Ms. Janow received her law degree from Columbia University, and is currently a professor of international economic law and policy at Columbia University teaching advanced graduate courses in international trade law and law of the WTO. She has served as a panelist in a WTO dispute, was a practicing lawyer, and is a former Deputy Assistant U.S. Trade Representative. She is filling the vacancy being created by the departure of Mr. James Bacchus, a former U.S. Congressman and the last original member of the Appellate Body.

"I greatly appreciate the work of James Bacchus over the past 8 years. He has played a vital role in helping the Appellate Body to establish itself," Zoellick said. "Mr. Bacchus should be commended for his distinguished service on this important Body."

Ms. Janow's appointment was as a result of a recommendation from a WTO selection committee composed of diplomats from all over the world serving as the chairpersons of the key WTO committees.

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